

Amendments to the Drawings:

The attached formal drawing sheets replace the original set of formal drawing sheets.

Fig. 5: The label for block 72 was changed from "Biasing Source" to "Pulse Source."

Fig. 6: The label for block 72 was changed from "Biasing Source" to "Pulse Source."

REMARKS

Claims 1-35 are pending. Claims 1, 12, 18 and 31 were amended to more particularly point out and distinctly claim the present invention. Claims 5, 15 and 21 were amended to address the outstanding claim rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph. For at least the reasons set forth below, withdrawal of all outstanding rejections is respectfully requested.

The new language in claims 1, 12, 18 and 31 is supported by at least page 11, lines 9-11 in paragraph [033] of the specification. Accordingly, no new matter was added.

**35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, rejection,
Drawing Objection, and Specification Objection**

Applicants respectfully disagree with the Examiner's position that a "biasing source" is the incorrect terminology for the claimed element. However, to advance prosecution of the application, all instances of the "biasing source" in the claims, specification and drawings were changed to read "pulse source" which also accurately describes this element. Accordingly, withdrawal of these rejections and objections is respectfully requested.

Prior Art Rejections

Claims 31-34 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,561,373 (Itoh).

Claims 1-5, 9, 10, 12-15, 17-22, 26-29 and 35 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Itoh in view of the Chen et al. article.

Claims 6 and 23 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Itoh in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,873,031 (Mishra et al.).

Claims 7, 8, 24 and 25 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Itoh in view of the Chen et al. article, and further in view of Ker '557.

Claims 11, 16 and 30 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Itoh in view of Chen et al., and further in view of Consiglio

Withdrawal of these rejections is respectfully requested for at least the following reasons.

1. Patentability of independent claims 1, 12, 18 and 31 over Itoh and Itoh in view of other applied references

Itoh discloses that electrostatic stress (i.e., an ESD pulse as shown in Fig. 1C) is applied to a plurality of points of a semiconductor device (i.e., pads P₁-P₄). See column 4, lines 52-64. The Examiner recognizes that during each test in Itoh, all of the pads receive the same ESD pulse. However, since Itoh performs a test before and after each of the production processes (see column 3, lines 6-10), the Examiner takes the position that the claimed “first ESD-scale pulse” is equivalent to a test performed during one of the production processes, and the “second ESD-scale pulse” is equivalent to a test performed during another production process. However, Itoh provides the first and second ESD-scale pulses at different times (i.e., during different production processes, or before or after a particular production process).

In contrast to Itoh, the amended claims recite that the first and second ESD-scale pulses or signals are applied at approximately the same time to their respective terminals or points. The amended claims thus patentably distinguish over Itoh. None of the remaining applied references make up for this deficiency in Itoh.

2. Patentability of dependent claims

The dependent claims are believed to be patentable over the applied references for at least the reason that they are dependent upon allowable base claims and because they recite additional patentable elements and steps.

Conclusion

Insofar as the Examiner's rejections were fully addressed, the present application is in condition for allowance. Issuance of a Notice of Allowability of all pending claims is therefore requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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